

In The Claims:**Claims 1-46 (canceled)**

47. (New) A method of connecting a terminal to a host system on a communications network, the terminal including a communications interface, a display, a storage device and an input device, the method comprising

activating a message viewer on the terminal, the message viewer for controlling communications and for receiving and displaying images on the terminal, the message viewer having a first version identifier

the message viewer causing a connection with the host system to be established through the communications interface on a communication line

the message viewer transmitting a user ID and a password for a user of the terminal to the host system through the communications line

the message viewer receiving an approval from the host system for the terminal to access the communications network through the communications line

the message viewer transmitting the first version identifier to the host system through the communications line

the message viewer receiving an upgraded version of the message viewer through the communication line

the message viewer storing the upgraded version of the message viewer in the storage device

the message viewer activating the upgraded version of the message viewer on the terminal, whereby the upgraded version of the message viewer assumes control of the communication and image display from the message viewer having the first version identifier.

48. (New) The method of connecting a terminal to a host system of claim 47 wherein the

message viewer comprises a client program.

49. (New) The method of connecting a terminal to a host system of claim 47 wherein the terminal further includes an operating system having associated therewith an operating system type, the method further comprising the message viewer transmitting the operating system type to the host system before receiving the upgraded version of the message viewer.

50. (New) The method of connecting a terminal to a host system of claim 47 further comprising displaying a message on the display that the upgraded version of the message viewer has been received, after receiving the upgraded version of the message viewer.

51. (New) The method of connecting a terminal to a host system of claim 47 further comprising, before activating the upgraded version of the message viewer

the message viewer displaying a message on the display that the upgraded version of the message viewer is available

the message viewer receiving an upgrade response input from the user through the input device of the terminal indicating that the user wishes to receive the upgraded version of the computer program.

52. (New) The method of connecting a terminal to a host system of claim 47 further comprising, before receiving the upgraded version of the message viewer

the message viewer receiving a message from the host system that the upgraded version of the message viewer is available

the message viewer displaying a message on the display that the upgraded version of the message viewer is available

the message viewer receiving an upgrade response input from the user through the input device of the terminal indicating that the user wishes to receive the upgraded version of the message viewer.

53. (New) A recording medium storing a message viewer program comprising program

code to be read by a terminal communicating with a host system through a communications line; the terminal including a communications interface, a display, a storage device and an input device; the message viewer for controlling communications and for receiving and displaying images on the terminal; the message viewer having a first version identifier; the program code comprising instructions for causing the terminal to

cause a connection with the host system to be established through the communications interface on the communication line

transmit a user ID and a password for a user of the terminal to the host system through the communications line

receive an approval from the host system for the terminal to access the network through the communications line

transmit the version identifier to the host system through the communications line receive an upgraded version of the message viewer through the communication line store the upgraded version of the message viewer in the storage device

activate the upgraded version of the message viewer on the terminal, whereby the upgraded version of the message viewer assumes control of the communication and image display from the message viewer having the first version identifier.

54. (New) The recording medium storing a message viewer program comprising program code to be read by a terminal communicating with a host system through a communications network of claim 53, wherein the message viewer comprises a client program.

55. (New) The recording medium storing a message viewer program comprising program code to be read by a terminal communicating with a host system through a communications network of claim 53, wherein the terminal further includes an operating system having associated therewith an operating system type, the program code further comprising instructions for causing the terminal to, before receiving the upgraded version of the message viewer, transmit the operating system type to the host system.

56. (New) The recording medium storing a message viewer program comprising program

code to be read by a terminal communicating with a host system through a communications network of claim 53, the program code further comprising instructions for causing the terminal to, after receiving the upgraded version of the message viewer, display a message on the display that the upgraded version of the message viewer has been received.

57. (New) The recording medium storing a message viewer program comprising program code to be read by a terminal communicating with a host system through a communications network of claim 53, the program code further comprising instructions for causing the terminal to, before activating the upgraded version of the message viewer

display a message on the display that the upgraded version of the message viewer is available

receive an upgrade response input from the user through the input device of the terminal indicating that the user wishes to receive the upgraded version of the computer program.

58. (New) The recording medium storing a message viewer program comprising program code to be read by a terminal communicating with a host system through a communications network of claim 53, the program code further comprising instructions for causing the terminal to, before receiving the upgraded version of the message viewer

receive a message from the host system that the upgraded version of the message viewer is available

display a message on the display that the upgraded version of the message viewer is available

receive an upgrade response input from the user through the input device of the terminal indicating that the user wishes to receive the upgraded version of the message viewer.

59. (New) A terminal for connecting to a host system on a communications network, the terminal comprising

a communications interface

a display

a storage device

an input device

means for activating a message viewer on the terminal, the message viewer for controlling communications and for receiving and displaying images on the terminal, the message viewer having a first version identifier

means for causing a connection with the host system to be established through the communications interface on a communication line

means for transmitting a user ID and a password for a user of the terminal to the host system through the communications line

means for receiving an approval from the host system for the terminal to access the network through the communications line

means for transmitting the version identifier to the host system through the communications line

means for receiving an upgraded version of the message viewer through the communication line

means for storing the upgraded version of the message viewer in the storage device

means for activating the upgraded version of the message viewer on the terminal, whereby the upgraded version of the message viewer assumes control of the communication and image display from the message viewer having the first version identifier.

60. (New) The terminal for connecting to a host system on a communications network of claim 59, wherein the message viewer comprises a client program.

61. (New) The terminal for connecting to a host system on a communications network of claim 59, wherein the terminal further includes

an operating system having associated therewith an operating system type

means for, before receiving the upgraded version of the message viewer, transmitting the operating system type to the host system.

62. (New) The terminal for connecting to a host system on a communications network of

claim 59 further comprising means for displaying a message on the display that the upgraded version of the message viewer has been received after receiving the upgraded version of the message viewer.

63. (New) The terminal for connecting to a host system on a communications network of claim 59 further comprising

means for displaying a message on the display that the upgraded version of the message viewer is available before activating the upgraded version of the message viewer

means for receiving an upgrade response input from the user through the input device of the terminal indicating that the user wishes to receive the upgraded version of the computer program.

64. (New) The terminal for connecting to a host system on a communications network of claim 59 further comprising

means for receiving a message from the host system that the upgraded version of the message viewer is available before receiving the upgraded version of the message viewer

means for displaying a message on the display that the upgraded version of the message viewer is available

means for receiving an upgrade response input from the user through the input device of the terminal indicating that the user wishes to receive the upgraded version of the message viewer.

65. (New) A method of operating a host system to provide an upgraded message viewer to a terminal, the message viewer for controlling communications and for receiving and displaying images on the terminal, the method comprising

causing a connection with the terminal to be established through a communications interface on a communication line

receiving a user ID and a password for a user of the terminal through the communications line

transmitting an approval to the terminal for the terminal to access a network coupled to the host system

receiving a first version identifier for a message viewer used on the terminal from the terminal through the communications line

determining whether the first version identifier is most up to date

if the first version identifier is the most up to date, the method ends

if the first version identifier is not the most up to date, transmitting the upgraded message viewer through the communication line to the terminal.

66. (New) The method of operating a host system to provide an upgraded message viewer to a terminal of claim 65, wherein the message viewer comprises a client program.

67. (New) The method of operating a host system to provide an upgraded message viewer to a terminal of claim 65, wherein the terminal further includes an operating system having associated therewith an operating system type, the method further comprising

storing plural versions of the upgraded message viewer according to operating system type

receiving the operating system type from the terminal before transmitting the upgraded message viewer

selecting the upgraded message viewer according to the operating system type of the terminal.

68. (New) The method of operating a host system to provide an upgraded message viewer to a terminal of claim 65 further comprising, after determining that the first version identifier is not the most up to date

transmitting a message to the terminal that the upgraded message viewer is available

determining whether there is a downloading request from the terminal in response to the message

if downloading is not requested, then the method ends

if downloading is requested, then the upgraded message viewer is transmitted to the terminal.

69. (New) A recording medium storing a computer program comprising program code to be read by a host system communicating with a terminal through a communications line; the message viewer having a first version identifier; the program code comprising instructions for causing the host system to

cause a connection with the terminal to be established through a communications interface on the communication line

receive a user ID and a password for a user of the terminal through the communications line

transmit an approval to the terminal for the terminal to access a network coupled to the host system

receive a first version identifier for a message viewer used on the terminal from the terminal through the communications line, the message viewer for controlling communications and for receiving and displaying images on the terminal

determine whether the first version identifier is most up to date

transmit the upgraded message viewer through the communication line to the terminal if the first version identifier is not the most up to date.

70. (New) The recording medium storing a computer program comprising program code to be read by a host system communicating with a terminal through a communications line of claim 69, wherein the message viewer comprises a client program.

71. (New) The recording medium storing a computer program comprising program code to be read by a host system communicating with a terminal through a communications line of claim 69, wherein the terminal further includes an operating system having associated therewith an operating system type, and the host system stores plural versions of the upgraded message viewer according to operating system type, the program code further comprising instructions for

causing the host system to

receive the operating system type from the terminal before transmitting the upgraded message viewer

select the upgraded message viewer according to the operating system type of the terminal.

72. (New) The recording medium storing a computer program comprising program code to be read by a host system communicating with a terminal through a communications line of claim 69 further comprising instructions for causing the host system to

after determining that the first version identifier is not the most up to date, transmit a message to the terminal that the upgraded message viewer is available

determine whether there is a downloading request from the terminal in response to the message

transmit the upgraded message viewer to the terminal if downloading is requested.

73. (New) A host system for connecting to a terminal on a network, the host system comprising

a communications interface

a storage

means for causing a connection with the terminal to be established through a communications interface on a communication line

means for receiving a user ID and a password for a user of the terminal through the communications line

means for transmitting an approval to the terminal for the terminal to access a network coupled to the host system

means for receiving a first version identifier for a message viewer used on the terminal from the terminal through the communications line

means for determining whether the first version identifier is most up to date

means for transmitting the upgraded message viewer through the communication line to

the terminal if the first version identifier is not the most up to date.

74. (New) The host system for connecting to a terminal on a network of claim 73, wherein the message viewer comprises a client program.

75. (New) The host system for connecting to a terminal on a network of claim 73, wherein the terminal further includes an operating system having associated therewith an operating system type, the host system further comprising

means for storing plural versions of the upgraded message viewer according to operating system type

means for receiving the operating system type from the terminal before transmitting the upgraded message viewer

means for selecting the upgraded message viewer according to the operating system type of the terminal.

76. (New) The host system for connecting to a terminal on a network of claim 73 further comprising,

means for transmitting a message to the terminal that the upgraded message viewer is available after determining that the first version identifier is not the most up to date

means for determining whether there is a downloading request from the terminal in response to the message

means for transmitting the upgraded message viewer to the terminal if downloading is requested.

77. (New) A method of operating a host system to provide an upgraded message viewer to a terminal, the message viewer for controlling communications and for receiving and displaying images on the terminal, the method comprising

causing a connection with the terminal to be established through a communications interface on a communication line

receiving a user ID and a password for a user of the terminal through the communications line

transmitting an approval to the terminal for the terminal to access a network coupled to the host system

determining a last communication time comprising a time when the terminal last communicated with the host system

determining a last upgrade time comprising a time when a message viewer on the terminal was last upgraded

determining an upgrade release time comprising a time when distribution began of the upgraded message viewer

comparing the last communication time and the last upgrade time to the upgrade release time

determining whether the last communication time and the last upgrade time are before the upgrade release time

if the last communication time and the last upgrade time are before the upgrade release time, then

transmitting the upgraded message viewer through the communication line to the terminal.

78. (New) The method of operating a host system to provide an upgraded message viewer to a terminal of claim 77, wherein the message viewer comprises a client program.

79. (New) The method of operating a host system to provide an upgraded message viewer to a terminal of claim 77, wherein the terminal further includes an operating system having associated therewith an operating system type, the method further comprising

storing plural versions of the upgraded message viewer according to operating system type

receiving the operating system type from the terminal before transmitting the upgraded message viewer

selecting the upgraded message viewer according to the operating system type of the

terminal.

80. (New) The method of operating a host system to provide an upgraded message viewer to a terminal of claim 77 further comprising, after determining whether the last communication time and the last upgrade time are before the upgrade release time, if the last communication time and the last upgrade time are before the upgrade release time

transmitting a message to the terminal that the upgraded message viewer is available

determining whether there is a downloading request from the terminal in response to the message

if downloading is not requested, then the method ends

transmitting the upgraded message viewer to the terminal if downloading is requested.

81. (New) A recording medium storing a computer program comprising program code to be read by a host system communicating with a terminal through a communications line; the message viewer having a first version identifier; the program code comprising instructions for causing the host system to

cause a connection with the terminal to be established through a communications interface on a communication line

receiving a user ID and a password for a user of the terminal through the communications line

transmit an approval to the terminal for the terminal to access a network coupled to the host system

determine a last communication time comprising a time when the terminal last communicated with the host system

determine a last upgrade time comprising a time when a message viewer on the terminal was last upgraded

determine an upgrade release time comprising a time when distribution began of the upgraded message viewer

compare the last communication time and the last upgrade time to the upgrade release

time

determine whether the last communication time and the last upgrade time are before the upgrade release time

transmit the upgraded message viewer through the communication line to the terminal if the last communication time and the last upgrade time are before the upgrade release time.

82. (New) The recording medium storing a computer program comprising program code to be read by a host system communicating with a terminal through a communications line of claim 81, wherein the message viewer comprises a client program.

83. (New) The recording medium storing a computer program comprising program code to be read by a host system communicating with a terminal through a communications line of claim 81, wherein the terminal further includes an operating system having associated therewith an operating system type, and the host system stores plural versions of the upgraded message viewer according to operating system type, the program code further comprising instructions for causing the host system to

receive the operating system type from the terminal before transmitting the upgraded message viewer

select the upgraded message viewer according to the operating system type of the terminal.

84. (New) The recording medium storing a computer program comprising program code to be read by a host system communicating with a terminal through a communications line of claim 81 further comprising instructions for causing the host system to

after determining that the first version identifier is not the most up to date, transmit a message to the terminal that the upgraded message viewer is available

determine whether there is a downloading request from the terminal in response to the message

transmit the upgraded message viewer to the terminal if downloading is requested.

85. (New) A host system for connecting to a terminal on a network, the host system comprising

a communications interface

a storage

means for causing a connection with the terminal to be established through a communications interface on a communication line

means for receiving a user ID and a password for a user of the terminal through the communications line

means for transmitting an approval to the terminal for the terminal to access a network coupled to the host system

means for determining a last communication time comprising a time when the terminal last communicated with the host system

means for determining a last upgrade time comprising a time when a message viewer on the terminal was last upgraded

means for determining an upgrade release time comprising a time when distribution began of the upgraded message viewer

means for comparing the last communication time and the last upgrade time to the upgrade release time

means for determining whether the last communication time and the last upgrade time are before the upgrade release time

means for transmitting the upgraded message viewer through the communication line to the terminal if the last communication time and the last upgrade time are before the upgrade release time.

86. (New) The host system for connecting to a terminal on a network of claim 85, wherein the message viewer comprises a client program.

87. (New) The host system for connecting to a terminal on a network of claim 85,

wherein the terminal further includes an operating system having associated therewith an operating system type, the host system further comprising

means for storing plural versions of the upgraded message viewer according to operating system type

means for receiving the operating system type from the terminal before transmitting the upgraded message viewer

means for selecting the upgraded message viewer according to the operating system type of the terminal.

88. (New) The host system for connecting to a terminal on a network of claim 85 further comprising,

means for transmitting a message to the terminal that the upgraded message viewer is available after determining that the first version identifier is not the most up to date

means for determining whether there is a downloading request from the terminal in response to the message

means for transmitting the upgraded message viewer to the terminal if downloading is requested.

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